

Peasants' Rising, the poll-tax policy was one ; and whatever other effects the rising had, it certainly put a stop to this new financial expedient.¹

Our ally the Duke of Brittany had been at Westminster for some time, keeping high festival with King Richard. Meanwhile the armies of his suzerain Charles the Fifth, led by Du Guesclin, the most famous warrior of the clay, were tearing the unfortunate province of Brittany to pieces with a devastating war. At last, shamed by the repeated representations and reproaches of his loyal subjects, he consented to return to his post. He left his placasautcr quartorp in England on the distinct promise of Richard and his Council that an expedition should be immediately sent to help him drive Du Guesclin out of Brittany.* The monoy levied by the poll-tax was applied to the purpose : 50,000/., it had been calculated, would be raised by this expedient, and a sum at least as great as that would be required to raise an efficient army. But again, it appeared, a fatal and ridiculous miscalculation had been made, such as had rendered the budget of 1871 useless. The actual proceeds of the poll-tax amounted to £2,000/., less than half the sum on which they had reckoned. Such a force as could be raised with this monoy was put on board the fleet at Southampton, but not before one regiment had distinguished itself by violating a nunnery and harrying the countryside. It was December when the fleet sailed* A furious storm arose which drove back the greater part of it, and wrecked the remainder on the coast of Ireland* It is satisfactory to learn that the offending regiment and their brutal captain, Sir John Arundel, perished on the rocks. The remnant of the expedition got safely back to port, but was not sent out again. The Duke of Brittany never saw a single man of the promised reinforcement.³ Meanwhile the King's advisers, as yet ignorant of the fate of this expedition, had summoned a new Parliament. In January 1880 the Houses met at Westminster* The season of the year, unusual and inconvenient for such an assembly, marked the critical circumstances that necessitated it. Chancellor Scrope confessed the

¹ iiL 57-8,

² 3?rQ10s,» it daaps.

« *Ibid*, iL ov. ; Wals. I. 418-35.